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STUDENT FORUMS

ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

of

THE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

and

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMISSION

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SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMISSION

The San Francisco Public Schools Commission was formed in January 1975 as a cooperative effort by the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The general objectives of the Commission are to identify problems in the School District and to assist in implementing agreed-upon solutions. The Commission is supported through grants from the San Francisco Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Irwin Foundation, the Gerbode Foundation, the Cowell Foundation, and the San Francisco Unified School District. A special grant from the Zellerbach Family Fund partially supports the Commission's activities with students.

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 Ms. Joan Abrahamson,
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Dr. Luvern L. Cunningham, Executive Director (Through June 30, 1976)

Mrs. Bernice Brown, Executive Director (July 1, 1976 through November 30, 1976)

*Mr. Mellon resigned August 27, 1976 prior to becoming a candidate for the Board of Education.

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STUDENT FORUMS

JOINT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
of
THE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
and
SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMISSION

October 1976

Prepared for
THE SAN FRANCISCO
PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMISSION

September 1976

This report was written by
Colleen Wong, Secretary
Student Advisory Council
and

Ms. Joan Abrahamson
S.A.C. Executive Director

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMISSION

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MR. WILLIAM M. ROTH
Chairman

DR. LUVERN L. CUNNINGHAM
Executive Director

October 25, 1976

Dr. Lee S. Dolson
President, Board of Education
San Francisco Unified School District
135 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102

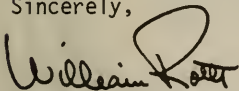
Dear Dr. Dolson:

The Student Advisory Council and the San Francisco Public Schools Commission co-sponsored three school site forums and one city-wide student forum during March, 1976. These meetings were conducted to provide an opportunity for high school students to express their concerns and ideas to the Commission, the Board of Education, the Superintendent, and the public.

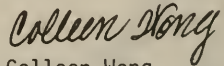
We feel that the forums have proven to be a valuable method of gathering student opinions about their schools and their needs. This report quotes extensively from student comments made at the city-wide forum, suggests means for conducting similar sessions in the future, and offers a series of recommendations.

We urge that the Board adopt these recommendations and continue to support the Student Advisory Council in coming years.

Sincerely,



William M. Roth
Chairman
San Francisco Public Schools Commission



Colleen Wong
Secretary
Student Advisory Council



CITYWIDE STUDENT FORUM

FORUM IS CO-SPONSORED BY SAN FRANCISCO HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS AND SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMISSION.

PURPOSE: TO GIVE STUDENTS A PUBLIC VOICE FOR THEIR
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FOREWORD

by

The San Francisco Public Schools Commission

The San Francisco Public Schools Commission was established primarily to consider the disparity between the dollars spent by the School District and the disappointing educational results. Therefore, most of our work has focused on the way the District manages its resources, and we have given particular attention to the formal decision-makers in the system — Board members, administrators, and teachers.

This report differs. Earlier Commission publications have been based upon studies made by professional educators and specialized scholars. Here the students speak for themselves. They help us understand their day-to-day experiences in the city's high schools and share with us their feelings about the quality of the education available to them.

The student forums held in the spring of 1976, which are the subject of this report, were a collaborative effort between the Student Advisory Council to the Board and Superintendent — then in the process of formation — and the Commission. The Commission wanted to know first hand what students thought about their schools. The newly-formed Student Advisory Council provided the access needed. It was made up of representatives of the city's high schools and was designed to be the official link between high school students and the Board and Superintendent. The Commission encouraged prompt recognition of the Student Advisory Council, and the seating of a student on the Board of Education.

The high school forums were among the first activities undertaken by the Council. They spotlighted the SAC and immediately demonstrated its potential. They also provided a significant new source of information for the Commission in its studies of such matters as testing, site management, the role of principals, the evaluation of teachers, and the results of District board and administrative decisions as they take effect in actual practice in the Schools.

The Student Advisory Council organized forums in each of three high schools as "trial runs" and then scheduled a city-wide student

forum. The Commission accepted the Council's invitation to co-sponsor all of these meetings, to help plan and arrange them, and to assist in moderating the city-wide forum which climaxed the series. The Commission supplied a list of questions important to its own studies for student reaction and comment. The SAC edited these and also opened the discussion to other subjects high school students wanted to address.

The report which follows was prepared by the SAC. The Commission is happy to publish it to acknowledge the valuable insights gained from listening to students discuss their education, and to encourage further use of the student forum model. The report is in three sections. The first quotes extensively from student opinions expressed at the city-wide forum. The second sets out procedures for organizing similar forums. The third and final section lists a number of recommendations agreed upon both by the Student Advisory Council and the Commission. We believe that if these were adopted and put into practice the atmosphere and functioning of the schools would improve.

In conclusion, the Commission is convinced from its experience with San Francisco's first Student Advisory Council that students have significant things to say about their education, and that the time has come for them to be heard in systematic and orderly ways. We believe that the Board and Superintendent should give the Student Advisory Council whatever help it needs to understand both the complex procedures of the Board and the profoundly difficult educational issues about which decisions will have to be made.

This publication has four functions:

1. To convey the substantive material discussed at the forums;
2. To stimulate discussion in high school classes of how students might express their concerns and ideas directly to key decision-makers;
3. To help students who wish to organize forums with "how-to" suggestions; and
4. To awaken the public, the Board of Education and the administration to student concerns and their ability to express them.

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For an unnecessarily long time, students have been frustrated in pursuit of effective exercise of their Constitutional rights under the First Amendment: speech, assembly, and petition. "If we complain to our teacher, our counselor, or our principal, somehow it never gets to the Superintendent and the Board." Moreover, students are dismissed as immature.

Though some students have attempted to organize into a city-wide student coalition, they have found that they cannot single-mindedly devote their efforts to this project — they must study and work and tend to their personal lives. Furthermore, with a turnover of student leaders each year, newcomers build on absolutely nothing.

However, in December 1975, a student group consisting of Danita Robinson (McAteer High), Nancy Wiltsek (Washington High), and Colleen Wong (Mission High) met weekly with Assistant Superintendent George Boisson to plan a city-wide student council. The trio had to start from scratch. Ted Samuel from the School District radio station was recruited to be its sponsor. Bob Brawley and Matt Buttle were recruited to represent Wilson High and John Trasvina attended from Lowell High.

These organizers then drafted the by-laws of the Student Advisory Council, declaring that "Student involvement is necessary for a better educational experience." The stated purpose of the Council was "*To gather student opinions regarding all matters concerning their education and to provide leadership.*" The by-laws were approved with minor revisions by the Board of Education and the Superintendent on May 12, 1976.

While it waited for approval of these by-laws, the Student Advisory Council (SAC) participated in the screening of candidates for the office of Deputy Superintendent of Instruction, attended a statewide conference, appeared on a television show, and decided on its future; developing an informational booklet for high school students, a newsletter, and a teacher evaluation form. SAC also recruited Cheryl Hill (Galileo High) Dan Nuckols (Lincoln High), Maurice Rivera (Mission High), Angela Toussaint and Carmen Micheaux (Balboa High) to further represent the students of the District.

The birth of the SAC coincided with the existence of the San Francisco Public Schools Commission. The San Francisco Public Schools Commission's Student Task Force, and consultants Joan Abrahamson and Marilyn Morris contacted the SAC to bring student input to the

work of the Commission. This turned out to be a spectacular kickoff for the SAC.

A series of student forums was subsequently held at three of the City's high schools: Mission on March 4, McAteer on the 11th, and Galileo on the 16th. The meetings were organized and chaired by SAC members. The San Francisco Public Schools Commission provided refreshments and assistance in making the arrangements. At each meeting four to six Commissioners listened to the plaintive, angry, humorous, direct and most certainly enlightening testimony of students. No one had ever heard them before.

The culmination of these meetings was a City-wide Student Forum on March 31, at the Board of Education chambers at 135 Van Ness Avenue. At this meeting, for the first time, students reversed the usual seating arrangement and members of the SAC sat in the Board members' chairs. Unfortunately, the City workers' strike erupted that day and prevented many students from attending the forum.

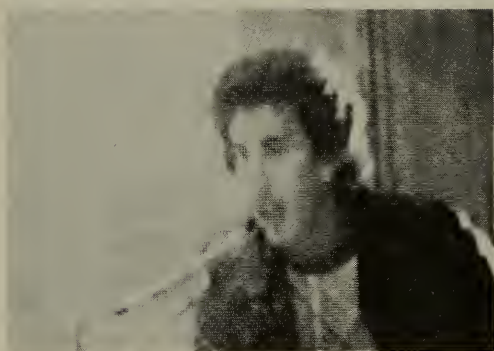
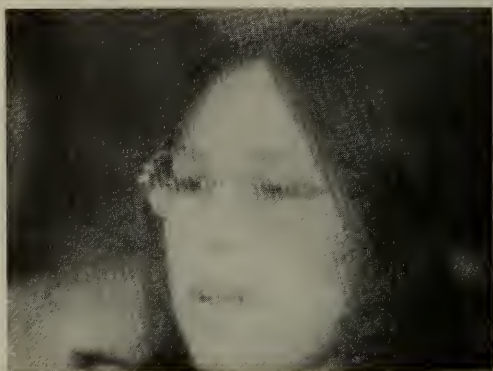
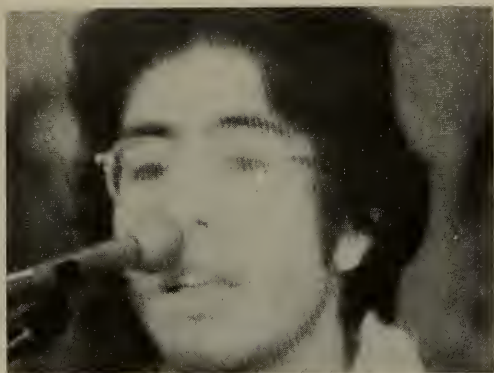
Because of concerns expressed at these forums, another meeting was held in the Board room on May 17. The topic was student evaluation of teachers. San Francisco Public Schools Commissioners, Board of Education members, representatives of teacher organizations, and other concerned individuals were present.

The forum idea was an experiment. It was designed to receive student opinion on issues of concern to the San Francisco Public Schools Commission and to test the forum as a model for communication between students and the Board of Education, the Superintendent and the public. The initial forums at Mission High, McAteer High, and Galileo High used different variations in format, although the basic purposes and structure were the same. Each took on a form and feeling reflective of the SAC member who organized it and the students who attended. We feel that from the site forums and the City-wide Student Forum a valuable method of hearing students has been developed.

This publication is a brief summary of these efforts and their results. Never before in San Francisco has there been such a momentous opportunity — an opportunity created by students themselves to improve their education, their lives and their community.

THE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Student Advisory Council was formed in March 1975 as a co-operative effort of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools with high school students of the San Francisco Unified School District.





I.
CITY-WIDE STUDENT FORUM



I. CITY-WIDE STUDENT FORUM

BACKGROUND

The City-wide Student Forum was co-sponsored and co-chaired by the Student Advisory Council and the San Francisco Public Schools Commission. Aileen C. Hernandez and William Matson Roth represented the Commission on the dais; the SAC was represented by Bob Brawley and Matt Buttle (Wilson High), Cheryl Hill (Galileo High), Dan Nuckols (Lincoln High), Danita Robinson (McAteer High), John Trasvina (Lowell High), Nancy Wiltsek (Washington High), and Colleen Wong (Mission High).

Questions were prepared and asked by the Student Advisory Council members. A number of these questions were related to issues under study by the Commission. There was also an opportunity for students to discuss their own concerns.

Audiotapes and videotapes of the city-wide and site forums and the teacher evaluation forum are available through the SAC; however, it was not possible to transcribe the site forums in time for this publication. The following excerpts are from the taped transcripts of the City-wide Student Forum. All remarks are those of San Francisco public high school students.

EXCERPTS FROM THE CITY-WIDE STUDENT FORUM

S.F.P.S. Commissioner: "We have very simple ground rules. Each of the students who is at the dais, sitting in the places normally reserved for the Board of Education members, will direct a question on a specific subject to the group. We are asking that the answers be from the students only. We will give adults an opportunity to be heard if there is time after the students have their say and we hope that you will respect that."

GRADING SYSTEM

SAC Member: *The work of students is evaluated by grades. Do you think that grades accurately reflect you as a student? Have you ever gotten straight A's? Have you ever flunked a test? How do you feel about getting grades?*

Student: I think they're fair. I don't think that there is any other method that could be used. If it could be used, I don't think that it would work out that well, simply because we are so accustomed to using the A-B-C-D type of method. The one thing that I'm sort of puzzled about, concerns me, is the difference in teachers. Teachers use the grades as different things. For example, in one of my English classes I received a "C" for a midterm grade, and the teacher is expecting to change the grade later on in the year, because he simply feels that the class is not long enough to merit a midterm grade. Another teacher I know gave out an awful lot of "A's" simply because the students were seniors and he wished for them to get into college. I think that the grades need to have more of a definition behind them than simply "A" as doing very well, "B" not so hot, and "C" average.

Student: I would like to start off saying that grades are a more or less necessary practice in the educational process . . . needed is some type of written and verbal evaluation to go along with the grades.

Student: There is no meaning in the grades. Teachers will give a student a "D" if he will come to class. Student will get a "C" if he comes to class and does a little work. He gets a "B" if he comes to class and is doing o.k.: gets an "A" if he's doing all right. I've had many teachers and many classes where that was how I got my grade. . . . My average says I'm 3.4, but I don't feel that I'm really up to that capacity, and that's because people don't really take the grades seriously. they just give them to you.

TESTING

SAC Member: *Do you think that the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT) show anything about what you really know, I have taken the SAT simply because I needed it to get into college; and I thought it cost too much money. I don't really think that they show how much you know. Do you think that the SAT, ACT, and the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) and the tests that you take in class show anything about intelligence or what you really know?*

Student: The San Francisco School District offers a free education for a majority, just about anyone who wants to take advantage of it or use it. And these tests for any college that you want to go into, you have to take them (tests) because your chances for getting into college if you don't take them are very slim. I don't understand why they charge such an outrageous price for them. I took all the tests and it cost me \$12.00 plus \$20.00 for an entrance fee for each application. To be a senior and to have to take all these tests when I should be getting a so-called free education from the San Francisco School District just doesn't make sense.

Student: Can we measure intelligence in regards to tests? . . . There has been too much emphasis on tests in the past. There are such things that cannot be measured in a test as potential, determination, a will to succeed; those things cannot be measured by a test.

SCHOOL CLASSES

SAC Member: *What kind of classes would you like to see? What kind of improvement would you like to see in classes?*

Student: There should be equalized sports. I feel that the guys have an advantage . . . I think that the guys have to come down some and the girls have to come up some.

Student: What does the future hold for the student when he graduates? I think more classes should be directed towards jobs and careers which help the student see how he can apply what he has learned and how he can obtain a career or occupation. When we deal with education we have to look into the future and see what things can we teach that will benefit the student realistically.

Student: There are some classes that we students take . . . that we need to specialize in when we become professionals or whatever, but some teachers are incompetent in teaching the material that you're supposed to know. So while taking these SAT tests or these math tests you are not able to complete what these (SAT, math) tests require because these teachers have **slacked off** in their **duties** of trying to teach students . . . **how are we going** to have a system of evaluation of teachers by the students?

TEACHER EVALUATION

SAC Member: *In the District often teacher go on and on for years without ever having their work evaluated by the recipient of their work — the student. I'm sure the Commission would like to hear students' feelings about teachers and counselors being evaluated by students, some sort of effective system of evaluating the teachers.*

Student: I think that every student should be given the opportunity to write something (about teachers) down on paper and have somebody to turn it in to to read it

or to stick in their files, so that somebody knows what one person has said about their teacher. Whether it's good or bad, it's important! In the teacher's record there should be something about how the student feels about the teacher.

Student: When I talk about evaluating, what I'm talking about is a person could go in his first period class, get a form, and it would have identical questions. It would say, "Do you think the teacher's method of teaching is effective?" The sort of things that are constructive and will help the teacher and should help the students in the future if that teacher uses that evaluation to improve him or herself.

Student: Definitely, we need some sort of way (of evaluating teachers). The students should have some say in what's happening. Also I think it's up to the teachers themselves to worry a little bit less about their tenure and worry a bit more about the education of us, or we should get these teachers out of there.

Student: Any teacher that comes to the educational field should at least want to change it to make education better . . . Many teachers and many administrators, and in fact even the state superintendent and local superintendent, believe sometimes that students are not aware or are good judges of (teachers') professional character or professional ability . . . If we can get that theory removed, then, not only will the teachers want to have evaluations but they will actually act upon them as well.

Student: At Lowell, we have a method of testing the teachers; and it's called "teacher survey". All the students get to do it so it's pretty good. It's about the only way I guess you can really find out how a teacher is doing except by giving them a test. It appears in the school

paper. It comes out right before we pick our classes, so it's pretty good to know if a teacher is recommended. I guess it helps them shape up a little bit when their class size starts dropping. We can look and see which teachers are listed as not caring about their classes, but you can't really do anything about it.

Student:

I was one of the students working on the survey and setting it up. For the past two and a half, or three years, the results have consistently shown that when they are published they are effective. Also, they have consistently shown that the popular teachers are not necessarily the highest ranking teachers on the survey, that there is a great differentiation between a popular teacher and an education(ly) good teacher.

Student:

There are some classes that are mandatory according to the California state requirements, like history or mathematics. And some students know which teachers aren't any good . . . Let's say there's this student who doesn't care about history (and knows) that there is a teacher that is inept, he just wants to shove you along and give you a grade. Well, whoever isn't concerned about history will take this teacher and this teacher will give them an A. This goes on the student's grade point average and makes it look good on his report card.

SCHOOL-SITE MANAGEMENT

SAC Member: *When you speak of site management, basically what you're speaking of is taking the decision-making for the school out of these hallowed halls down to the school level. And what this means secondly is, who's going to make the decisions at the school? Will it be the administration or will it be the administration and the faculty, or the students and the principal? The*

trend has been towards taking it down from the central office to the school level but still I believe at one of the schools in this district the principal has decided that there will be no input from the students on who the student advisor will be. So there is a differing in schools of thought on that. And basically the question today is "Do you care about being involved in this decision-making process?" If so, how would you like to be involved?

Student:

You've got to understand that the educational process is supposed to be set up for meeting our needs, that is, the needs of the students. And then coming from that, you've got to understand that the educational process will openly affect our futures and our life styles. And me, personally, being concerned about myself, anything that is openly going to affect my future and my life style, I'm going to be a part of the decision-making process and have some say-so in that. So students must definitely have a part in the decision-making process.

Student:

At McAteer, it was coming to the point where they made a decision-making model. And a lot of teachers were against having any student input. Well, our student government acted on that and now we have student input. I think it should be taken to the student council and to the faculty to devise meetings where they can get together and discuss different topics so that there won't be such a communication gap. These two committees have to give in a little bit, so that they can come together. I think that it's up to us to make sure that we do have our say.

Student:

I really feel that student voices should be heard. There should be some way that their voices can be heard.

Student: Thought without action is empty. You can speak and say all you want, but until you actually get out there and participate in that decision-making process there ain't nothing going to get done.

Student: I think the question is, "Can students make decisions, or can the administrators and faculty or parents make decisions for students?" I think we learned 200 years ago that we can't go along with taxation without representation. We're the ones having problems decided for us. We are affected every day. I think that because of that students haven't been involved but should be involved.

Student: I feel that many students are concerned about their education and they want to do something about it. I don't think that there is a student here that is not capable of making an intelligent decision on the matter. Now students are discouraged from participating . . . they have no power. I think if you give the student the power, the student will be able to use it properly.

Student: I'm totally for student management because the people at the place know what is happening, and not someone sitting in a faraway place. But, I do feel that the principal at each school site is going to be the main leader, so I think it's very important that principals be good leaders. Student government is supposed to provide leadership for the entire student body of the school. And I find that to be untrue in a lot of cases. I know a lot of them who just don't work at all. How is that management going to work if there aren't any programs to develop leadership? And we know that students could be good leaders.

Student: There are a lot of students who are taking these positions as student body president, senior class president, and they are very inept. They take these roles, and they're the ones who are going to shoot you down once you get in a position to try to help. I question them, and they say, "It's not me, it's the people that I have to work with." But then when you get someone to work with them, they act quite childish and are not willing to accept these people to work with.

Student: There is no such thing as "the student"; there is a bunch of students. Some of them are not leaders, they are not permitted to be leaders. When you are dealing with a big mass, the students who are supposedly the leaders form an elite group.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

SAC Member: *We would like to know how you feel about bilingual education, if you think it is an important thing, how it works at your school, or how it doesn't work at your school.*

Student: The ESL program is a good thing; however, it does have a tendency to isolate the student. And people will learn faster if they're mixing with the other students, with the students who are naturally born in the United States and therefore speak the language.

Student: I tend to hang around with the kids I go to class with more than with the kids I would see after school and at activities or something. I think that one of the biggest problems with the ESL is that when you're in class, say you are in class with other Chinese speaking

students and they are the ones that you know well, you would naturally hang around with them and they would be your friends, and outside of the classroom, 90% of the time you would speak Chinese. If they were mixed in with other groups of people with other different nationalities, I would think that they would tend to learn a lot more quickly and have a lot more friends with different backgrounds.

SOME STATEMENTS STUDENTS MADE ABOUT FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Student: We have a special Spanish program. The way the class works is that you do a chapter, you do it on your own speed, and then you take small tests along the way. Then you get to the end of the chapter and you take the main test on the chapter. And when you pass through these chapters in one grading period, six weeks, then you get a grade, if not you get an incomplete or an F. This system works very well. There are some students in their second year of Spanish and are doing fourth year work because they really want to learn and they are not going to forget that.

Student: If you are going to have a second language, do not make it mandatory.

Student: I think that second languages should be mandatory . . . I would like to see more languages in the San Francisco School District. If they're there, then you're going to find students who are interested in taking them. But right now they're just not there.

Student:

I think that it is important to take a language in order to understand a person's culture. Since we're Americans we're being conditioned. Since English is a universal language why should we take their language? They have to take ours. If you start to learn a language you become aware of the culture. You can understand why these people carry on the way they do.

Student:

I kind of envy everyone here who says that they have the opportunity to take a different language class. The administration at O'Connell focuses too much on the vocational . . . I'd like to find a way to get a different language class available at O'Connell.

Student:

When I think of bilingual education I think of someone coming from Italy or Holland or somewhere.. And he comes to the United States and he wants to become a citizen here. And once they become a citizen I think it is the responsibility of our government that these people know how to communicate in our society.

Student:

I also think that the ESL and the bilingual programs are desirable. I think it's undesirable to just take a student and bring him into this country and tell him, "Ok, now you're going to learn English, and that's it." The transition, not only language-wise, but also culturally, is a great one. These programs do serve to ease that transition. I think it's undesirable to make everyone anglicized. By going against bilingual/bicultural programs you're anglicizing the people. It's also interesting to point out that when California became part of the United States, the California constitution said that all government and business would go on in both Spanish and English. That is the ultimate, bilingual government; of course that has never been carried out. It is undesirable to do away with these programs.

INTEGRATION

SAC Member: *It is the opinion of some people that integration is necessary to assure education of equal quality in each school regardless of the neighborhood. And I'd like to know what you all think of that.*

Student: To put somebody in that position, to take 50 Chinese people and to put them into this junior high school so that they can mix with two other nationalities or whatever, isn't going to do any good. When you talk about integration, you should talk about integrating them mentally. And there is no way I can respect somebody else's culture unless I am familiar with it. And so far I have found a lack in my education of knowing about other people's cultures. And there is no way integration can be successful until you start giving people knowledge of different cultures, so that they can have a reason to respect somebody else's culture.

Student: Motivation is the basis for education. Without that motivation you can't expect the student to perform adequately or proficiently . . . If his history has consistently been downgraded, degraded, talked about, and things of this nature, you can't expect him to believe in what you say about "America, the land of the free". . . Until we can understand various cultures we won't be able to look at them from the proper perspective of how we individually rate as a culture of the world. The culture is a very important aspect of education.

Student: I think that the whole idea of integration is a flop. Downtown (135 Van Ness) they look at the statistics, and it says McAteer: 15% White, 16% Black, 4% Chicano, and so on, and so on. And that looks good;

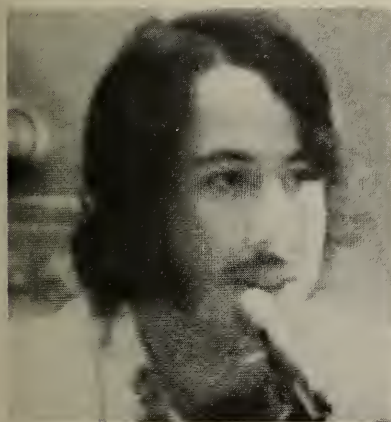
they've achieved everything they wanted. But what happens is inside the school you have the whites up at the top of the stairs with their skateboards, you've got the Chicanos in the cafeteria with the dominos, you've got the Black students with the cards. It's not what they're doing, it's that they aren't getting together. Even though it looks good on the papers downtown, there is no such thing as integration in the schools.

Student:

I've been a long-standing supporter of the idea behind integration. However, the way it's been carried out is pretty much a farce. I think a lot of people, people down here at the Board, are expecting too much when they say that integration is failing, because they haven't given it enough time. They expect an overnight thing to happen like all of a sudden all of the races are supposed to come together, and it's not going to happen that way . . . It is something that is going to take time. It is something that you have to start in the first grade.

* * * ' * *

Neither the topics nor the comments cited above exhaust the contents of the meeting. They are quoted, however, to illustrate the concerns of some of the students who attended. In the hope of stimulating forums in the future, the following sections provide "Questions for Discussion" and offer some tips on "How to Organize" similar sessions. Both sections have been developed from the experiences of the Student Advisory Council this year.



II. HOW TO ORGANIZE A FORUM



II. HOW TO ORGANIZE A FORUM

When organizing a student forum, proceed with care. Integrity and maturity will win support from fellow students and from teachers and administrators. This task requires strong student leadership and co-operation with all student groups. Unity is strength!

IMPORTANT POINTS:

1. *Decide your purpose.* Is it to communicate with the public what it's like to be in your school? Is the meeting for students to air their criticisms of the school and their ideas to improve it? Or, is the meeting to develop policy on an issue of importance to you? Is it to hear testimony from experts on teacher evaluation, integration, site management, collective bargaining, or other subjects in order to better formulate your recommendations?
2. *Choose your setting.* What atmosphere is most suitable? Is there a room in your school where people can speak and easily hear each other?
3. *Decide on format.* How shall the meeting be chaired? Who will make initial introductions? How can you keep the meeting moving and let many people speak? Will you have a strict agenda? How will you allow for flexibility? Do you want to direct the first part of the forum to issues which concern your guests, i.e., teacher evaluation, site budgeting, collective bargaining, disciplinary procedures, etc., and reserve the latter portion for questions raised by students in your school and for issues which affect them daily, i.e., cafeteria food, non-functioning bathrooms, bus transportation, broken windows, threat of physical harm, etc.? Will there be time limits for each comment? Will waiting speakers stand in line in the aisle? Will students be able to speak from their seats? Are microphones needed for the audience? Who will greet guests and direct them to the room? Where will your guests sit? How will you record the session? Videotape? Auditotape? How can you arrange for video equipment? Will students feel free to speak honestly? Will you allow time for refreshments and for students to mix with the guests? Who will sum up the meeting and adjourn it? What will result from the meeting?

TO BEGIN:

1. Get clearance from your principal.
2. Where will you hold the meeting? Good sites to consider are auditoriums, classrooms, theatre or music rooms, gyms, libraries, and resource centers. If you choose the outdoors which may be good for mass rallies — the yard, park or football field — be ready for the weather and for street noise. Will people be able to hear each other? How will you keep order?
3. When? If you are holding the meeting during school, invite student government, social studies, and other classes through the teachers. Be sure to distribute your agenda and questions for discussion at the forum to these classes at least a week before the meeting. If the meeting is after school, consider transportation and other arrangements for students. The first city-wide Student Advisory Council forum at the central administration office coincided with the first day of the transportation strike. We couldn't anticipate that!
4. To maximize publicity, use every possible media outlet. Contact your school journalism class and student senate or executive council. Use the public address system, teachers' bulletins and homeroom announcements. For posters, free help is sometimes available from the Neighborhood Arts Program (558-2335). Contact the Examiner, the Chronicle, the Progress, TV and radio stations, and as many minority newspapers and community organizations as possible. Send a media release (written notice of your forum and its purpose) to them and follow up with personal phone calls to the education writers. Submit a notice for the SFUSD Newsletter to the Public Information Office (565-9388).
5. Send written invitations to members of the Board of Education and to the Superintendent of Schools. Follow up with personal phone calls to their offices.
6. Invite your administrators to sit in the audience and respond to questions if necessary. Remember, this is a student forum to let students speak.
7. Let the SAC and student governments at other schools know about your forum so they can attend.

8. For advice and support services, contact the SAC at their office (your office) at 135 Van Ness Avenue (565-9000).
9. See if funds for recording tape and refreshments are available from your student government, student activities funds, principal's office, or the Board of Education. Philanthropic foundations may be able to help too.

TO PROCEED:

1. Write and distribute your agenda and a list of questions for students to think about. (See illustrative list at end of this section.)*
2. Make sure the forum is well publicized in your school.
3. Decide if you want refreshments. Can they be prepared by your homemaking classes? Have someone take responsibility for making arrangements for refreshments, getting them there, and cleaning up.
4. Consider how long the meeting should be. We found two hours to be long enough for people to voice their concerns without getting restless. This seems to be adequate time for introductions, the forum, and informal conversations with officials. Remember to check bell schedules and recess times to avoid disruption.
5. Do you want to broadcast your forum live over KALW (the School District's radio station)? The station can provide this service. If so, call the station at 648-1177 to see if arrangements can be made.

AFTER THE FORUM:

1. What will result from the meeting? Some forums are designed to help students formulate a position on issues of concern to them. Some are organized to provide an open channel between the students and others, including decision-makers, on a continuing basis. Some might be organized to communicate with the public through the media.
2. Follow up after the meeting to make sure that your purposes have been achieved.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS WHICH CAN BE DISTRIBUTED TO STUDENTS IN ADVANCE OF FORUMS:

1. What do you think of quizzes, tests, exams, and finals?
2. Do you think that standardized tests (STBS, PSAT, SAT) are necessary?

3. Do you think these tests show anything about your intelligence?
4. What classes and programs are most important to you at your school?
5. What do you think about integration? Has it affected you? What do you think of busing?
6. How should students have the opportunity to communicate their concerns to the Superintendent and to the Board of Education?
7. How should students evaluate their teachers, counselors, and principals?
8. Should schools have the opportunity to make more decisions on site?
9. If so, how can students be involved in site management?
10. How are students affected by collective bargaining? Can they have a voice in teacher/management negotiations which so directly affect their education?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION BY CLASSES INTERESTED IN STUDENT FORUMS:

Questions for discussion by classes interested in student forums:

1. Why forums? What do they try to accomplish?
2. Is it important for students to communicate with decision-makers?
3. Who are these decision-makers?
4. How can students have direct communication with Board of Education members?
5. What methods other than forums are possible?
6. What results can come from a forum?
7. What other formats are possible?
8. Can the student newspapers play a more important role in getting student concerns before the public?
9. Can students have real input to Board of Education policy? How?
10. Is the SAC representative in your school effective? Who is he/she?
11. What contact do students have with their representative?
12. How can the SAC function to better serve fellow students?
13. How would you organize a forum for your school?

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be a student forum at each high school site each year with the full Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools in attendance. (At the site forums, it is possible to hear from students who would not or could not attend an off-campus meeting.)
2. There should be one city-wide student forum in the early spring of each year organized by the Student Advisory Council with assistance from the School District.
3. To facilitate the continuity of the Student Advisory Council, each high school should hold its election of an SAC representative and alternate in the spring so that newly elected representatives can become familiar with the work of a current council. The regular member should be a sophomore or junior; the alternate should be a sophomore.
4. The district should print and distribute to each high school a minimum of 100 copies of the Student Advisory Council profile and by-laws at the beginning of each school year.
5. The student Board member should be seated at meetings of the Board of Education so that he or she is not separated from the other Board members.
6. One student from each high school journalism class should be invited to sit at the press table at Board meetings.
7. Each member of the Board of Education is urged to attend a Student Advisory Council-organized day in a designated high school each semester. During this visit the Board member should:
 - Use student bathrooms.
 - Eat in the student cafeteria with students.
 - Walk unescorted in yards, halls, libraries, and resource areas during recess.
 - Attend scheduled classes:
 - Attend a game after school.
 - Talk with the student senate or executive council.
 - Return a SAC questionnaire and written reactions to the SAC.
 - Discuss the visit with the SAC member who organized the "field trip".

8. In order to familiarize themselves with the functioning of the SFUSD, students should have the opportunity to visit the District's headquarters at 135 Van Ness Avenue with their classes for an SAC-organized tour and for discussions.

APPENDIX

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

ARTICLE 5 — STUDENTS

P 5132

SECTION ACTIVITIES — STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Date: May 12, 1976

Student Advisory Council: The Board of Education approves the "Bylaws of The Student Advisory Council" which have been prepared and adopted by the Student Council:

Preamble

We, the students of the San Francisco Unified School District, believing that student involvement is necessary for a better educational experience, hereby establish these bylaws for the Student Advisory Council of the S.F.U.S.D.

Article I — Name

The name of this organization shall be the Student Advisory Council of the San Francisco Unified School District.

Article II — Purpose

The purpose of this organization is to gather student opinions regarding all matters concerning their education and to provide leadership.

Article III — Membership

All regular and alternate representatives of each high school in the S.F.U.S.D. shall become members of the S.A.C.

Article IV — Form of Organization

This organization shall consist of the regular and alternate representatives, and the Advisor.

Article V — Representatives

Each school of the S.F.U.S.D. shall have two representatives. The regular representative is to attend all meetings and serve. The alternate is to be kept informed of all matters and assume the responsibilities of the regular representative when necessary.

Section I — qualifications of representatives

The only qualification for representatives is a genuine interest in educational affairs of the S.F.U.S.D.

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Section II — election of representatives

Interested candidates may be elected by the student council of the high school, by the entire student body or by the schools' elected organization or body. Following this school year there will be an election process for the members of the Student Advisory Council.

Section III — duties of representatives

The representatives shall attend all meetings, and they shall be active participants. They are to report the proceedings of the meetings of the S.A.C. to their respective schools.

Article VI — Secretary

The secretary of the S.A.C. shall be the only elected officer.

Section I — qualifications of the secretary

The qualifications of the secretary would be the ability to function effectively in the duties of the office.

Section II — duties of secretary

The secretary shall record minutes, prepare agendas and serve in a secretarial capacity at all times.

ARTICLE VII — MEETINGS

The S.A.C. shall meet four times a month. The first and second monthly meetings will be composed of members of the S.A.C. only. Prior to the third meeting of the month, an invitation will be sent to the Superintendent of Schools and the Commissioners of the Board of Education inviting them to attend. An agenda of that third meeting will be sent to them at least a week in advance. The fourth meeting will be open to all high school students desiring to express their views to the S.A.C. The weekly meetings shall be chaired on a rotating basis.

Article VIII — Advisor

A representative of the senior high school office shall serve as advisor to the S.A.C. The S.A.C. advisor shall assist the organization when necessary. The advisor shall attend all regular sessions of the organization.

Article IX — Board of Education Meetings

A member of the S.A.C. shall sit on the Board of Education on a monthly rotating basis and will have all privileges of the Commissioners

APPENDIX

except for voting power, attendance to executive sessions and pay. If the Board of Education has functioning subcommittees, each member of the S.A.C. shall serve on at least one committee and shall have the same privileges as the other subcommittee members except for voting power.

Section I — meeting

We urge S.A.C. members to attend as many Board of Education meetings as possible.

HISTORY/AUTHORIZATION

Adopted: 1961

Amended: Resolution #441-12A17, November 11, 1974

Amended: Resolution #62-24S-p 2 as amended by #63-9A6, March 9, 1976

(NOTE: The question of a student vote on the Board is under discussion.)

